

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2104**

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
S-230, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader McConnell,

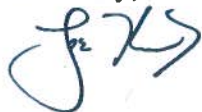
In recent weeks, we have watched the coronavirus outbreak spread from the Wuhan province in China to every corner of this country, from our own neighborhoods and communities in New England to the Pacific Northwest, Florida, and California. Already, six Americans have died from this virus, dozens have been diagnosed and countless others may have been exposed and left untested. Shelves in our stores have been wiped clean, misinformation has spread across social media, and health care providers are feeling the heavy burden of a potential pandemic.

Many of the providers who will be standing on the frontlines of our response to the coronavirus will be community health centers (CHCs) that frequently serve the most vulnerable patient populations. In 2015, CHCs served more than 24 million Americans in nationwide. Specifically, CHCs provide care and treatment for patients living in underserved rural and urban areas. Patients arriving at our nation's community health centers tend to be more diverse and less wealthy than the larger population in this country.

Although there is still much unknown about the spread, symptoms, and potential harm of this virus, we have already seen that low-income Americans will experience increased barriers to lifesaving testing and treatment that wealthy patients will not confront. CHCs, their staff, and administration, will be asked to shoulder an increased burden in the coming days, weeks, months and potentially years because of those systemic health care inequities.

As you consider emergency supplemental measures to prepare us for this outbreak, it is critical that CHCs receive robust funding. Whether hiring additional staff, training existing providers, obtaining critical tools, materials, and tests, or providing outreach into their neighborhoods, this burden will fall on the same community health centers that have fallen prey to frequent political dysfunction in the past. We cannot repeat those same mistakes and overlook an irreplaceable resource in our own backyards.

Sincerely,



Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress